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IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. When strikethrough cannot easily be perceived, or when five or fewer characters are deleted, [[double brackets]] are used to show the deletion. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claim 6 without prejudice and AMEND claims 2-5, 10, 11, and 12 in accordance with the following:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently Amended) A status setting method according to claim 10, wherein ~~the user status and a user attribute defining a configurable user statuses are correlative registered in the status table each user status is associated with an attribute of a user who is permitted to select the user status in the user status selection tables.~~
3. (Currently Amended) A status setting method according to claim 10, wherein ~~the user terminal stores a common table in which prescribed user statuses are registered, and sets the is previously prepared, and said common table as a user status selection table is obtained if no status table is prepared for a virtual space in which user terminals participate, and a user status on said virtual space is set for if no user status selection table is stored for the virtual space based on an obtained common table.~~
4. (Currently Amended) A status setting method according to claim 10, wherein setting of a user status selection table by a user is accepted.
5. (Currently Amended) A status setting method according to claim 10, wherein said user terminal can display a user status the user statuses with a symbol, the user status statuses and the symbol symbols are correlative registered in a user status selection table, and a status of another user sharing a virtual space is displayed with a symbol relating to the user status in the user status selection table.

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6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable recording medium having a status setting module for executing the method set forth in claim 10.

8. (Previously Presented) A transmission medium transmitting a status setting module for executing the method set forth in claim 10.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A user-status setting method in which a user terminal can send, receive, and display a user status and a character message on at least one virtual space shared on a network, the method comprising:

storing a plurality of user status selection/user status selection tables including a selectable list of user status candidates defined for each virtual space in which a user participates user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space;

reading out the user status selection/user status selection table of each virtual space in which a user terminal participates when the user terminal has participated in a plurality of virtual spaces;

displaying on the user terminal the list of the selectable user statuses for each virtual space based on the read-out user status selection/user status selection table;

setting a user status which was selected from the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space in which the user has participated;

sending to each virtual space the set user status;

receiving from each virtual space the set user status; and

displaying the set user status for each virtual space.

11. (Currently Amended) A status setting system comprising:

a plurality of user terminals which send and receive user statuses and character messages on at least one virtual space shared on a network;

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storing means for storing a plurality of ~~user status selection~~user status selection tables including a selectable list of ~~user status~~ candidates defined for each virtual space in which a user participates user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space;

obtaining means for reading out the ~~user status selection~~user status selection table of each virtual space in which a user terminal participates when the user terminal has participated in a plurality of virtual spaces;

display means for displaying on the user terminal a list of the selectable user statuses for each virtual space based on the read-out ~~user status selection~~user status selection table;

setting means for setting a user status which was selected from the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space in which the user has participated;

sending means for sending to each virtual space the set user status; and

receiving means for receiving from each virtual space the set user status, wherein the display means displays the set user status for each virtual space.

12. (Currently Amended) A status setting system comprising:

a plurality of user terminals which send and receive user statuses and character messages on at least one virtual space shared on a network;

a storage unit which stores a plurality of ~~user status selection~~user status selection tables including a selectable list of ~~user status~~ candidates defined for each virtual space in which a user participates user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space;

an obtaining unit which reads out the ~~user status selection~~user status selection table of a virtual space in which a user terminal participates when the user terminal has participated in a plurality of virtual spaces;

a display which displays on the user terminal a list of the selectable user statuses for each virtual space based on the read-out ~~user status selection~~user status selection table;

a setting unit which sets a user status which was selected from the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space in which the user has participated;

a communication unit which sends to each virtual space the set user status, and which receives from each virtual space the set user status,

wherein the display displays the set user status for each virtual space.

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13. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 12, wherein the user status includes a string of characters entered by the user.